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RACE AND CLASS IN RURAL BRAZIL

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Vila Recôncavo

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RACE RELATIONS IN A RURAL COMMUNITY OF THE BAHIAN RECÔNCAVO[1]

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[13] HARRY W. HUTCHINSON

I. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a narrow strip along the north-eastern coast of Brazil in what are now the States of Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe and Bahia, was the most important region of economic, political and social life in the whole colony. The rainfall along this portion of the coast is dependable and the extremely fertile soil, which was originally covered with thick forests, was ideally suited for sugar cane. By
[439] the seventeenth century, this region produced a large part of the world's sugar supply. Sugar, which was then a luxury in Europe, brought fabulous profits, and the north-eastern coast of Brazil
[633] became an exceedingly prosperous colony. Large cities grew up along the coast; Salvador in Bahia and Recife in Pernambuco became the most important centres of colonial life, and Salvador was the capital
[346] of the colony from 1549 to 1763. Both were cities of great wealth based on the booming sugar industry. The numerous churches built in Salvador during the period of opulence, with their elaborate gold-leafed wood carving and polychrome tile work, are witnesses to the tremendous wealth of the era.

175 It was the plantation system, the basis of this lucrative sugar
249 industry, which gave this region many of its characteristic traditions
567 and formed patterns of race relations which have persisted in a
565 modified form into the present. Gilberto Freyre in his monumental *Casa Grande e Senzala*, and other Brazilian writers [1],[2] have described life on these sugar plantations. African slaves provided the manpower. More than three million Negroes were imported from Africa during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a large proportion came to the sugar plantations of north-
[571] eastern Brazil. The Portuguese plantation owners became rich, and came to form a regional aristocracy with a luxurious and ostentatious way of life. The slaves and their masters, on these plantations, formed two distinct social groups, but it is distinctive of the region that their relations were intimate and warm; Freyre describes the intimacy between the *moleque* (Negro lad) and the master's son as playmates, between the master's wife and her domestic servants, between the Negro nurse and her white charges, and other close

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[1] In addition to thanking those persons listed in the introduction to this series of articles for their aid and co-operation in making this study possible, I wish to thank the Henry L. and Grace Doherty Charitable Foundation Inc. and the Department of Anthropology of Columbia University, whose grants of funds contributed largely to the possibility of this study. Also, to acknowledge with thanks the aid of Carmelita Junqueira Ayres and Elisa Amelia Ferreira for their assistance in the collection of the data.

[2] The figures in brackets refer to the bibliography on page 68.

ties between Negroes and whites on these colonial plantations. All writers have mentioned the frequency of sexual relations between the white plantation owners and their female slaves. Slavery was not a humane institution in Brazil or elsewhere, but in Brazil relations between the slave and the master were of a more personal nature than in other regions where slavery existed in the New World.

By the middle of the last century, the West Indies and other regions of the world were competing with the Brazilian north-east for the world sugar market; and the abolition of slavery in 1888 caused difficulties of labour supply on these plantations. The sugar industry no longer provided the great wealth that it had in the past, and many of the old plantations were abandoned or sold to large commercial companies who installed modern equipment for large-scale sugar production. Plantation slaves became wage labourers, and the old traditional patterns of behaviour between the Negro slave and the white plantation-owning aristocrat began to disappear, to be replaced by an impersonal employee-employer relationship in keeping with the new way of life. Yet many patterns persist from the days of the old plantation system. Many of the descendants of the aristocratic plantation owners try to preserve the old traditions. They are proud of their family names, and large aristocratic families are still important in the economic and social life of the region. In many rural localities, there are still plantations where the relations between the workers and the owners are highly personalized, as they were in the past, and where customs and traditions formed during the period of opulence and slavery continue, if modified, by modern conditions. Throughout this part of Brazil, the relations between people of different racial groups have been influenced by the large proportion of Negroes in the population, by the importance of slavery in the relatively recent past, and by the particular form which the relations between the Negro slave and the European master took on the plantations.

II. The community with which the present article is concerned is called Vila Recôncavo; it is a real town situated in the zone known as the Recôncavo which surrounds Salvador, the capital of the State of Bahia, and which borders on the Bay of All Saints, extending inland from the shores of the bay some 30 miles on the northern side, and considerably less on the southern side. The Recôncavo was characteristic of the whole north-eastern plantation region. The Portuguese who settled in Salvador in 1549 recognized the value of these lands around the new city and the Bay of All Saints for sugar production. The third governor of Bahia, Mem de Sá (1557-74),

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1. Mulatto cowboy of the interior of Bahia

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gave sugar growing a great impetus by organizing expeditions of soldiers which he led into the farthest reaches of the Bay of All Saints, killing, driving out or enslaving the hostile Indian inhabitants, so as to make the area safe for settlers to move out of the city into the surrounding area and plant sugar. Mem de Sá himself built one of the largest and most productive of the sugar plantations in the Recôncavo.[2] His lands comprised three and a half leagues along the coastline of the Bay, extending four leagues inland, and two islands.[3] This *sesmaria*—as the early land grants were called—of Mem de Sá was broken down into smaller pieces by his daughter who inherited it, and by the end of the sixteenth century, most of the *sesmarias* of the Recôncavo had similarly, been divided into plantations averaging approximately 600 to 1,000 acres. In the past 250 years, many of these have kept the same boundaries and names, but their ownership has changed hands many times and they have passed through many cycles of prosperity and depression.

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The essential form of a plantation in the Recôncavo has changed little since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the past, the entire plantation was known as an *engenho*, taking its name from the sugar-mill building which was the heart of the plantation. There were two chief types of sugar mills, one operated by water power and the other driven by traction power supplied by oxen. Before the end of slavery, steam-driven machinery had also come into use. A typical *engenho* had four main items of wealth—its lands, its buildings, the livestock and the slaves. Most of the land was, of course, planted in sugar cane, but there were also wood forests to supply firewood, pastures for the livestock, and small areas devoted to the raising of food stuffs for the personnel of the *engenho*. The buildings of an *engenho* included the sugar mill, the *sobrado*, or home of the owner, and the slave quarters. The owner's house was frequently a very large and pretentious building with one and a half or two storeys. In the Recôncavo the landowners sought to build their houses *a meia encosta*, or against the side of a hill, giving the appearance of a two-storey house in front, but only one in the rear. Such homes were frequently constructed of stone, wood and mortar, with tile roofs. The slave quarters, which were known as *senzalas*, were generally long narrow buildings with sides of mud or *taipa* and and roofs of palm fronds. The livestock of a typical *engenho* consisted of oxen, burros, horses, sheep and cows. The oxen supplied the power to turn the grinding mills when there was no water power, and they pulled the large two-wheeled carts which were used to transport the cane from the fields to the mill. Horses and burros provided transportation for the plantation owner in supervising the work in the fields, and for him and his family for visits to nearby *engenhos* and to town. Cattle and sheep grazing on the portions of the land which were fallow supplied milk and meat to the plantation community.

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2. Cabocla of the interior of Bahia

The most valuable property of a colonial *engenho*, however, was the slaves. Comparatively few Portuguese came to the Recôncavo, and even those among them who had been labourers in Portugal did not come to Brazil to do manual work. African slaves had already been used on sugar plantations in the Madeira Islands, and a slave system was imported into Brazil along with sugar cane. Although it was expressly prohibited by the Portuguese Government,[4] the early settlers in Bahia enslaved the Indians who did not flee or who were not killed in the early fighting with the colonists. Governor Mem de Sá's Testament lists 95 Indian men slaves, 84 Indian women slaves and only 20 African slaves.[5] From the start, however, Indians were considered inferior to Africans as slaves; they seemed unable to adapt themselves to continuous labour in the fields and mills. Yet in many cases they were kept as fishermen, hunters and boatmen for the *engenho*, being in these activities superior to the newly-arrived Negroes. By 1700, the Negro slaves greatly outnumbered the Europeans in the region, and there were but few Indian slaves. Slave was almost synonymous with Negro.

An inventory of an *engenho* of about 650 acres, made in 1866 shortly before the end of slavery, gives a total value of 200 contos[1] for the *engenho*. The land, houses, slaves and livestock were valued at 125 contos; the value of the slaves alone was placed at 65 contos. The inventory divides the slaves into two categories: house slaves *(escravos de casa)* and work slaves *(escravos de lavoura)*. There were 18 house slaves and 103 work slaves. Among the house slaves were 1 barber-tailor-painter, 6 servants, 1 cook, 2 seamstresses and 1 apprentice seamstress, 2 sweet-makers, 2 laundresses, and 3 children without specific 'profession', as their occupation was called. Of the work slaves, 59 were listed as field workers (26 men and 33 women of all ages above the age of 12), 18 as small children, and 26 as specialists—including 4 ox-cart drivers, 5 sailors, 2 ironsmiths, 3 bricklayers, 1 field manager, 1 ship captain, 1 gardener, 1 barrel-maker, 1 specialist in the boiling of sugar, and 1 nurse. The prices of the slaves ran from 'without value' or as low as 20 milreis to as high as 1 conto 400 milreis, depending upon the age, physical condition and degree of skill of the slave.[2] The slaves were always listed in such inventories as foreign- or native-born and generally, if it were known, the place or tribe of origin was given. Many are listed simply as *Africano*. For those born in Brazil, the terms used are *Pardo*, *Cabra* or *Crioulo*; the diminutive form of these terms is used for all

[1] The conto is a unit of Brazilian currency, composed of 1,000 milreis. The milreis, or cruzeiro as it is also called today, is the standard unit of currency. In 1951 the milreis was officially valued at 3.37 cents in U.S. currency, making the conto worth $32.70. However, it must be kept in mind that in 1866 the value of the milreis was considerably higher.

[2] In 1835 this same *engenho* had 48 house slaves and 135 work slaves. The highest valued slave was 900 milreis.

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567 those under 12 years of age.[1] Of the 121 slaves listed in the particular inventory mentioned above, 40 were African. Most of these came from West Africa. Of those whose African origin is indicated, *Nago* (Yoruba) is most often listed, and *Gege* (Ewe) is second.

249 On these sugar plantations of the Recôncavo in the colonial period,
565 the overseer of all operations involved in the growth of sugar cane
463 and production of sugar was the owner himself. Generally, only the oldest son was trained to take over his duties on the plantation; the younger sons were sent to Salvador, to Recife, or even to Europe to be educated as lawyers, physicians, engineers or Catholic priests.
[582] Daughters were married early and given their dowry, or they were sent to convents to become nuns or live as lay sisters. Marriages with first cousins were frequent. Every effort was made to keep the plantation undivided and in the family. The Recôncavo sugar plantation, until about the middle of the nineteenth century, was a remarkably stable community changing little in size and organization from generation to generation.

249 After the abolition of slavery, there was a partial exodus of ex-
567 slaves from the plantations to nearby towns and to the capital of
463 Bahia. The ex-slaves who moved to small towns became manual
464 labourers or fishermen, or engaged in the profession they had learned on the plantations, such as barbering, bricklaying, etc. In other cases, ex-slaves rented small plots of land on neighbouring plantations
[427] to raise manioc, corn, tobacco and other crops which required little outlay of capital. Others became sugar planters on a small scale; known as *rendeiros*, they rented a few acres from a plantation and cultivated sugar cane, sending the product to the nearby *engenhos* for milling. In other cases, the ex-slaves simply moved from one plantation to another, or they often remained as free men on the same plantation, still engaged in raising sugar cane, living under the same
249 conditions as before, but legally free. Contrary to popular opinion,
433 the *engenhos* of the Recôncavo did not all cease operations after
567 abolition. Many of them kept on producing as before. In other cases the *engenho* or mill closed down while the plantation continued to plant sugar cane, sending it to a nearby *engenho* which was still functioning for milling. Some *engenhos*, however, did close down altogether and were abandoned, or went into the hands of receivers.

249 At this time many plantations changed owners—wealthy people in
471 the city were able to buy lands at a low cost and did so. But the
567 failure of many of the *engenhos* in the Recôncavo was not a direct result of abolition, it was rather the continuation of an economic
[425] trend which had been going on for a long time. For many years previous to abolition, the plantations of the Recôncavo had suffered
[826] from lack of capital, poor administration, occasional crop failure, and
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[1] In the inventories, *pardo* indicated light skin; *cabra*, dark skin; and *crioulo*, black. These same terms nowadays are used differently in the Recôncavo. See page 28 ff.

from the competition of other sugar-producing areas. Abolition was the factor which, in many cases, simply ended a struggle several decades old.

The overall production of sugar in the Recôncavo was already dropping noticeably at the time of abolition, and it continued to decrease afterwards. At the end of the last century, state-supported *usinas*, or large mechanical factories for milling sugar cane, were opened in an effort to stimulate sugar production. At the same time, various other *usinas* were opened by private capital. These central mills received and processed the sugar cane of many plantations. The *usina* had the advantage of freeing the planter from the worries of milling and marketing the sugar, allowing him to concentrate on higher production of sugar cane, while the mechanized *usina* was able to produce more sugar out of the cane, thus increasing production. This system of sugar production proved relatively lucrative, and the government *usinas* passed into private hands. The owners of *usinas* bought as many neighbouring plantations as possible, and in this way the *usineiros*, as they were called, became at the same time the mill owners and sugar-cane planters—employers of factory workers and of agricultural workers. The plantations which did not pass into the hands of an *usina* became *fornecedores*, supplying cane to one or another large sugar mill.

The *usina* system, however, in many respects did little to change the traditional plantation system. The plantations belonging to *usineiros* continue as separate units; each generally had an administrator, a man responsible to the *usineiro*, who is in charge of the plantation. As a rule the administrator, who is an employee of the *usina*, lives in the old *sobrado*, the former residence of the *senhor do engenho*, as the old plantation owners were known. The workers on the plantations and their families frequently still live in *senzala*-like houses, usually a long narrow building under one roof divided into separate apartments of two or three rooms. Despite many changes of technology, many examples of the old and the new exist side by side on these Recôncavo plantations. On the same plantation both mechanical tractor and ox traction may be used to pull plows. There are workers' houses side by side, one with electricity and a radio, and another using candles and kerosene lamps. Furthermore, the hierarchy of workers and specialists in sugar-cane raising persists little modified from the early nineteenth century. There are the field hands, the ox-cart drivers, the artisans and other specialists. The plantation is also approximately the same size as it was in the early nineteenth century (although several may be the property of one company nowadays) and it has about the same number of hired workers as it had slaves before.

But the *usina* system and other outside influences have made for many fundamental changes in the Recôncavo. In the very large

In the very large *usinas*, the mill hands and even the field hands are modern industrial workers. They are employees of a large industrial corporation and are protected at least theoretically by the labour laws of the nation. The highly personalized relationship between the plantation workers and the owner-administrator of his own plantation, which persisted from the slave era, has been replaced on the larger *usinas* by the impersonal employee-employer relationship of the modern industrial age. Today, modern plantations and small towns have electricity; there is modern housing for workmen; the State and even the sugar companies provide medical aid; there are primary schools both in the small towns and on many plantations; recreation facilities are found in the towns and provided by the *usinas*; and the sugar-cane experimental station situated in the area constantly urges fertilization of the land and modern techniques and methods of sugar-cane production. But the older and more traditional patterns exist side by side with the new, and each of them influences the relations among the racial groups of the zone.

III. Vila Recôncavo is a small town on the Bay of All Saints. The rural area around it, which lies within the social and economic orbit of the town and which is the unit under consideration, comprises some 80 square kilometres, or slightly less than half the entire area of the county of which the town of Vila Recôncavo is the county seat.[1]

It this area there are 14 plantations, three of which nowadays plant very little sugar cane. Parts of the town itself are built on the land of one of these plantations, and the rest of the town area is owned in small lots by private individuals or by the Church. Although Vila Recôncavo is the county seat, local government is the only important function which it fulfils for the surrounding area. It is not used as a shipping point, either for receiving supplies from the outside or for sending sugar to the outside. *Braços do mar*, or inlets of the bay, go to many of the plantations and are deep enough for the *saveiros* (shallow draft sailboats) used on the bay for transport. Many of the plantations have direct connexion with Salvador. Commerce in Vila Recôncavo is almost entirely limited to supplying the 1,462 inhabitants of the town and of some small islands and of one community near by which is not devoted to sugar production. It is not the major supply source even for these groups which live near enough to another and far larger commercial centre where they prefer to do their marketing. The *prefeito* or mayor of the county is rarely a resident of the town itself. Rather he is usually a planter of the surrounding area. He goes into town to do municipal business,

[1] Both the town and the county bear the name of Vila Recôncavo.

but spends most of his time on his plantation. The rest of the municipal officials are, for the most part, people who live in the town, although some of the town councillors are also planters living in the rural area.

The population of the area under study was 4,269 in 1940, and is approximately the same now. Of this number, 1,462 are residents of the town. Of the total of 4, 269, only 17 adults (plus their 16 children) in the rural area are considered locally, and appear to be, pure Caucasoid. They are all plantation owners, and all of them also have residences in the city of Salvador as well as in the rural area of Vila Recôncavo. Living in the town are 14 persons (plus their eight children) who are also considered pure Caucasoid. Three of these are foreign-born priests, one is a doctor, one a dentist, one a state tax collector, one a federal tax collector, and two are young men who have married into town families. The others are the wives and sisters of the men in the group, although one of the wives is suspected of having Negro ancestors since she has to have her hair straightened while the others have theirs curled.' There are five families and numerous other individuals in Vila Recôncavo who are called 'white', but whose ancestry is known to all as not being entirely Caucasoid, and in the rural area there are even fewer. These people are known as *brancos da terra* (whites of the land), a term similar to the *brancos da Bahia* of which Pierson speaks.[6]

The two other elements which are present in the population of Vila Recôncavo and the surrounding rural area are the Negro and the Indian. As might be expected, the Negroid element in the population overwhelmingly predominates, and there are people who represent mixtures of Negro and Caucasoid ancestry in all possible proportions. The American Indian element appears in the people called locally the *caboclos*, generally from the arid north-eastern *sertão*, who are of mixed Indian and Caucasoid descent. These *caatingueiros* (literally, people from the low brush country of *caatinga*) and *sertanejos* (literally, people from the *sertão*) are not usually permanent residents of the Recôncavo. As a rule, *levas* or groups of these *caboclos* of *caatingueiros* come down into the Recôncavo at harvest time, from September to March, to work during the period when the *sertão* is dry and unproductive.Generally also, only men come, and they remain apart from the permanent plantation workers and at the end of the harvest head for home.

In Vila Recôncavo and its rural area, four social strata can be distinguished. First, there is a small upper class of aristocratic whites. This is almost an endogamous class, and intermarriage between first cousins is extremely frequent. The 17 white adults mentioned above are the members of the five families which locally compose this class. These families have been in the area for generations; two of them have been linked through first-cousin marriages

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for several generations. In the other families, marriages have been, with but one exception, with persons of equal class status, although frequently with aristocratic families from other parts of the Recôncavo or from Salvador. In the one exception, the husband was without wealth or much education, but he was known to be of pure white descent. All these families live *em família* (within the family), both in the rural area and in the capital, where they spend a part of the year. Traditional family and friendship ties persist among them. They are large families with numerous relatives in the city and in other communities of the Recôncavo, so that dinners, dances, card parties, anniversaries and other social events are generally within the extended family. Most of the males in this group have a profession, such as lawyer, engineer or doctor.

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The second social stratum is a slightly larger group consisting of the bureaucrats of the town, plantation administrators, technicians and specialists of the sugar mill, merchants and professional people of the town, such as the doctor, dentist and schoolteachers. Persons in this group are for the most part descendants of local people, although the doctor, the dentist and several of the schoolteachers are from the outside. In this group, one finds the 14 'pure' whites mentioned as living in Vila Recôncavo itself, and five of them are members of a family of former planters. People in this stratum do not have residences in the capital. On the whole, this class is less well-educated than the class above it; it even includes people who have had no formal education whatsoever, and two individuals who cannot read or write. In this class are found most of the *brancos da terra*, many mulattoes and some Negroes, as well as the whites mentioned. This group might be termed the 'local upper class' to distinguish it from the small group of regional aristocrats mentioned above.

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The third social stratum of Vila Recôncavo is by far the largest numerically. It consists of 'the people' *(o povo*, or simply *gente)*, fishermen, carpenters, bricklayers, mill hands, plantation workers, and all others who do physical labour. Fourthly, there is a smaller group of even less status in the community, the people without a regular and steady income—women generally without husbands, but with children, who earn their living carrying water to homes from the nearby spring or who work as washerwomen and domestic servants, and men who serve as porters and perform other very menial tasks and odd jobs. There are no people in these two lower class strata who are considered 'pure' white. A few are considered *brancos da terra* but the great majority of them are Negroes, mulattoes, and others of various degrees of race mixture.

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The regional aristocrats reside only in the rural zone and maintain residences outside the community. The 'local upper class' is found in both the rural and the urban zones, since the technicians and administrators on the plantations are of this class, but mostly in the

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town, which is the centre of the municipal bureaucracy. The upper stratum of the lower classes is also found in both zones, since it contains town-dwelling artisans and fishermen as well as plantation workers. But the stratum of lowest prestige, the people who live marginally in Vila Recôncavo, is limited to the town itself. There is no place for them on the plantations or *usina* of the rural area.

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As has already been indicated, the major economic factor in the community area of Vila Recôncavo is sugar-cane growing and the manufacture of sugar. There are approximately 2,500 people dependent upon this activity.[1] Each plantation has its small community, with a store, houses, repair shop and the owner's house. Plantation workers live on the plantation, in houses belonging to it. They are paid according to the amount of work they do—that is, how much cane they cut per ton, or how many feet of planting they cultivate, etc. As a rule, there are only three salaried persons employed on a typical sugar plantation—the administrator, the *feitor* (foreman), and the *vaqueiro* (cowboy). The administrator is the most important person on the plantation, directing the work, making estimates for the forthcoming harvest, co-ordinating the cutting, transport and planting of cane, etc. It is the administrator who runs the plantation, who remains in the saddle all day overseeing the work, who checks on everything. The administrator is responsible only to the owner of the plantation, who generally acts through him. In nearly all cases the administrator is either a mulatto or a Negro. In two cases, Negro administrators are unable to read or write, but they are experts at their job and enjoy the full confidence of the owner and the respect of the workers. The *feitor* acts as the assistant of the administrator; he walks about carrying a measuring rod and a notebook, making note of the amount of work done by each man in the field. Frequently this is the middle step up the ladder from worker to administrator. As a rule, the *feitor* in Vila Recôncavo plantations is a mulatto, a dark *mestiço* (mixed) or a Negro as is the administrator. The *vaqueiro* is preferably a *caboclo* from the north. He looks after the oxen used for hauling the sugar cane—of which there may be as many as 90 to 100 head—and the milk cows, inspects fences, for the horses and mules, carries messages, and generally rides with the owner when he travels about from plantation to plantation. The three racial elements are thus represented among the high-prestige men of a typical plantation—the owner is Caucasoid, the administrator and the *feitor* are Negro-Caucasoid mixtures, and the cowboy from the *sertão* is generally of partly American-Indian descent.

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Under this hierarchy comes the main body of workers and their families, which totals about 200 on the average plantation. Such

[1] Of the total population of 2,500 people living on the sugar plantations and at the usina, approximately 600 men are the actual cane field and usina workers. Obviously this permanent labour force is inadequate; it is supplemented by groups of *cantigueiros* at the harvest-planting season.

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[241] sugar workers move rarely, remaining for generations on the same plantation. Each family has its garden where a little maize, beans
[465] and manioc are grown. Pay day comes every two weeks, when as a rule the worker goes to the owner's house to receive his money. The pay is small, 15 to 25 dollars a fortnight, depending on how
[461] much the man has worked during the period. Men do not like to work more than five to six hours a day, from six a.m. to twelve noon, and seldom work more than five days a week. They work easily, without hurry. In the afternoon they work in their garden, if their
249 wives have not already done so. On the plantation no one starves;
466 everyone has his *patrão* (protector) in the person of the owner, and in case of an emergency, accident or sickness, he expects help from him. This personal element is very important on most plantations in the vicinity of Vila Recôncavo; as a rule, the owner knows all the workers by name, knows their families and their family troubles and
[164] problems. He is aware of their love affairs and up-to-date on the health of new-born children and their mothers. Nearly all cases of sickness, from common colds and rheumatism to more serious ailments, are brought directly to the attention of the *patrão* or his wife. The owner, returning from a prolonged stay in the city, receives visits from the workers or from their wives, during which all the personal gossip is exchanged. The workers inquire about the owner's family and more extended family, for they generally know them all. Engagements, weddings, births, deaths and illnesses are reported on both sides. Complaints or requests are also made to the owner. The relationship is highly personal, intimate, gentle and frank.

466 On one rather small *usina*, which will be called São Pedro, in the
249 rural zone of Vila Recôncavo, the situation is somewhat different.
472 São Pedro is not one of the large *usinas* of the Recôncavo, owned by a corporation; it is relatively small and owned by one of the most
[473] important families of the Vila Recôncavo community, members of the regional aristocracy whose family has held plantations there for many generations. Because the owners of the *usina* actually administrate it, and since they are in residence in the locality at least part of the year, they are able to maintain many of the traditional personal relations with their employees, many of whom have worked on the plantations belonging to their family and in the *usina* for most
[162] of their lives. But there is a total of 1,183 workers and their families at the *usina* and on the plantations belonging to São Pedro, and the very size of the enterprise and the number of workers make for a more impersonal and more strictly economic relationship between employer and employee. Workers become more a name on a payroll, and the employer a person with whom one seldom has direct contact. In the larger *usinas* of the Recôncavo this trend is even more marked especially where the employer is a large corporation with offices in Salvador.

The other important occupation is fishing and there is the new petroleum industry. In Vila Recôncavo, bureaucracy plays a large part in the economics of the urban upper-class. The municipal secretary, the statistics agent, the federal and state tax collectors and their clerks, the postmaster and various other 'white collar' positions belong to this small group. Often members of the municipal government divide their attention between commerce (owning small stores) and their government jobs. Despite its long history and rather easy communication with the large city of Salvador, Vila Recôncavo is still an isolated community. After landing in the town from the regular steamer coming from Salvador, one must proceed inland either by foot or by animal. The only motor vehicles in the community area (except for those of the petroleum industry) are a truck and a delivery-type pick-up truck owned by the São Pedro *usina*. One hears from all classes that the town is backward, abandoned and dead. It has had a glorious past: wealth, the large and beautiful *sobrados* of the barons who were *donos dos engenhos* (owners of the *engenhos*), two beautiful churches, a national guard post with almost 1,000 soldiers stationed in it, a record of bravery and leadership in the war for Independence in 1822, and a place worthy of a visit from the emperor, Don Pedro II. Today the *sobrados* are in ruins, or have disappeared completely, as today's *donos dos engenhos* remain on their plantations or in the city, forsaking the town. The military have gone, the splendours of the religious feast-days are no more. Vila Recôncavo is representative of the decadence which has overtaken the entire area. Today it is known only for its *xangô* and shrimps.

IV. In the United States an absolute 'line' is drawn between white and Negro. A person who is not white is a Negro, however small the percentage of Negro blood may be. In Vila Recôncavo, this 'line' is recognized rather than drawn. A distinction between Negro and white is always kept in mind when classifying an individual. Everyone knows who is 'pure' white and who is not. Classification by race is one of the most important aspects of local culture, and one of the most difficult aspects for the outsider to grasp. *Bahianos* of the Recôncavo feel that one may instantly recognize the difference between a 'pure' white and a mixed white-Indian, white-Negro or Negro-Indian, but they do not let it go at that. They classify or minutely describe each person; they classify according to skin colour, according to hair form and according to facial features, and their classifications or racial types are used in everyday conversation. Just as it would be said in the United States that someone is short and fat, the people of Vila Recôncavo will describe a person's colour and hair.

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192 In the Recôncavo three race stocks are recognized: the white, the Negro and the Indian. A white is called a *branco*. The term *negro* is rarely used to denote a person of African descent. Rather such a person is called *homem de côr* (man of colour). *Negro* is used abstractly to denote the Negro race, but is almost never used to single out an individual. *Nego* (a softened variation of the word *negro*) may frequently be used as a term of endearment, even among whites, and sometimes as a nickname. When the *bahiano* of the Recôncavo speaks of *índio*, he usually thinks of the Indian of the interior of Mato Grosso or of the Amazon. When he wishes to indicate people of American Indian physical type in the Recôncavo, he generally says *caboclo*.

563 Yet even the whites are sub-classified, being divided into two
192 categories, the *louro* (blond) and the *moreno* (brunet). There is still
826 a third term for people with Caucasoid physical characteristics, but one which is used only by those who are considered 'pure' white—namely, *branco da terra*. A *branco da terra* is someone who is phenotypically white—that is, who has the physical characteristics of a Caucasoid: fair skin, fine features and 'good' (meaning *straight*) hair—but whose ancestry had Negro blood. He or she is generally *moreno*, and is frequently characterized by a slightly yellowish tinge to the skin. The *branco da terra* sometimes also shows traces of *caboclo* blood as well as of Negro and white blood. In Vila Recôncavo, the 'pure' white man may refer to such a person as a *branco da terra*, but ordinarily will call him or her a *branco*. To the majority of the population, the *branco da terra* is always called white, and no one would ever call anyone a *branco da terra* to his face. He is accorded the same treatment as a white by both whites and non-whites, and there is no constraint on anyone's part.

In classifying people, if skin colour is an important factor, hair form is equally important. If there is any question as to what to call a person, the hair is generally the deciding criterion. After skin and hair, facial features (prognathism, nose shape and thickness of lips) are considered. The many designations used in Vila Recôncavo for the people of Negroid or mixed ancestry can be broken down roughly into the following types in terms of these various criteria:

1. The *preto* or *preto retinto* (black) has black shiny skin, kinky, woolly hair, thick lips and a flat, broad nose. The *pretos* distinguish among themselves, and will rank themselves according to minute differences in 'quality' of skin colour, nose form, etc. The *preto* with the most '*qualidade*' is the farthest from the usual concept of a Negro, and yet still a black. He is a 'prettier' black.
2. The *cabra* (male) and *cabrocha* (female) are generally slightly lighter than the *preto*, with hair growing somewhat longer, but still kinky and unmanageable, facial features somewhat less Negroid, although often with fairly thick lips and flat nose.

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'The *cabra* and *cabrocha* generally lack the definite features and shine of the *preto*.

3. The *cabo verde* is slightly lighter than the *preto*, but still very dark. The *cabo verde*, however, has long straight hair, and his facial features are apt to be very fine, with thin lips and a narrow straight nose. He is almost a 'black white man'.
4. The *escuro*, or simply 'dark man', is darker than the usual run of *mestiços*, but the term is generally applied to a person who does not fit into one of the three types mentioned above. The *escuro* is almost a Negro with Caucasoid features. He generally has *qualidade*. *Escuro* is a very useful term for the outsider in the Recôncavo.
5. The *mulato* is a category always divided into two types, the *mulato escuro* and *mulato claro* (dark and light mulattoes). The *mulato* has hair which grows perhaps to shoulder length, but which has a decided curl and even kink. It can, however, be straightened. The *mulato's* facial features vary widely; thick lips with a narrow nose, or vice-versa. As a rule, the features are thicker than the *branco's* and thinner than the *preto's*. The *mulato* is generally distinguishable by a yellowish tinge to his skin colour, which is more accentuated than that of the *branco da terra*. His skin colour varies from very light to very dark. A *mulato claro*, with straightened hair, thin lips and a 'good' nose is very much like the *branco da terra*.
6. *Pardo* is a term not often used in speech. It is one of the official classifications used in the census and on identification papers. However, it is used occasionally to describe an individual who is closer to the white than a *mulato claro*. Occasionally *mestiço* children are described as *pardo*, before their features become distinctive enough to fit them definitely into one of the other groups. In one case, a little girl of three was called *parda* by her mother. The girl lives with her godfather, who is a *branco da terra*. He lists the girl as white, since her skin is very light and her hair is growing long and only slightly wavy. But her mother says she is a *parda*, because she knows that 'her hair may curl up any day, which would make her a *mulata clara*'.
7. The *sarará* is not difficult to distinguish. He has very light skin, and hair which is reddish or blondish but kinky or curled. His hair is described as *duro*, or hard. His facial features are extremely varied, even more so than the *mulato's*. There are *sararás* who would 'pass' for white in the United States, but more often the *sarará* has a curious appearance; skin which is neither dark nor light, frequently freckled, eyes with a greenish-blue cast and hair which bleaches easily in the sun. In Vila Recôncavo, the *sarará* is usually found among fishermen and those living on the islands. It is difficult to see a person of this physical type without a good sun-tan and bleached hair.

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8. The *moreno* has excellent skin, fine-textured and smooth. He is light-skinned but not white. He has dark hair, which is long and either wavy or curly. It is manageable and does not need straightening. His features are much more Caucasoid than Negroid. Here again we can distinguish between the dark and light *morenos*. Also we must distinguish between the *moreno mulato*, and the *moreno* of the white families—the *moreno branco*. *Moreno*, as used regarding the 'white', distinguishes the brunet from the blond of the same group.

Few people fit any of these 'racial' types 100 per cent. When someone comes very close to being a perfect *preto*—that is, has all the characteristics of the *preto*—people call him *bem preto* or *bem pretinho* (really black). The same is true of the *sarará*—*bem sarará*, or of the *moreno*, who will be called *bem morenínho* or *moreno fino*. It is just as difficult to find the perfect type for the other classifications, because there are so many variations. Often an individual is of one physical type, but has one or more characteristics of another type. For instance, one young man in Vila Recôncavo has the characteristics of an *escuro*, but since most people like him they prefer to think of him as *moreno*. He has fine skin and thin facial features, but tight kinky hair. People generally refer to him as *moreno*, adding '*mas êle tem cabelo ruim*' (but he has poor hair). One frequently hears 'he is *mulato*, but very light'. These verbal descriptions paint a vivid picture of the person in question. In Vila Recôncavo, it is not simply a matter of black and white, but of all the shades in between.

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A term of classification not listed above, *caboclo*, presents something of a special case. As mentioned earlier, most people with Amerindian physical traits have come into the Recôncavo from the *sertão* during the dry spells in the North. Considering the length of time that people of the North have been periodically coming into the Recôncavo, comparatively few have remained. Nevertheless, the population of Vila Recôncavo has a considerable *caboclo* element —that is, of people with a reddish or bronze tinge to their skin colour, more prominent cheek bones than the African or white elements, and a tendency toward almond-shaped eyes. However, few people in Vila Recôncavo bearing these marks are called *caboclos*. They are classified instead in the local terms listed above, ignoring Indian traits. In Vila Recôncavo, there is a certain disprasisal of the *caboclo*. He is considered less civilized than the resident of the Recôncavo, though often known as a better worker, more ambitious, trustworthy, more frugal; also less genial than the easy-going person of the Recôncavo. In the rural area of Vila Recôncavo, each year many *caboclo* men come to the plantations to work during harvest time. For the most part they stay together, away from the *morador*, or resident worker of the plantation. The plantations construct a type of barracks to accommodate these men, who do

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their own cooking, care for their own clothes, and spend their [464] evenings gathered around a fire, singing songs of the *sertão*, apart [466] from the permanent workers. [249]

There is a mutual desire to keep apart, for while the *morador* looks down on the *caboclo*, the *caboclo* feels very much the same about the local people. He feels that they are lazy, ignorant, and above all superstitious. The *caboclo vaqueiro* (north-eastern cowboy) of one plantation says that the workers of the plantation are always talking about black magic, that they are lazy and spendthrifts, and at the same time deride his frugality. He says he is not afraid of their black magic, since he knows there is nothing to it, but he distrusts those who speak of it. People in Vila Recôncavo will not admit they have *caboclo* or Indian ancestors. One young girl who is almost a perfect American Indian type says she is a *mulatinha*.[1] She vehemently denied there was any Indian blood in her family, but finally reluctantly admitted that a great-grandparent of hers had been partly Indian. This girl's niece would make a perfect double for the popular conception of Pocahontas, given a feather in her hair and a sarong, but she is considered a '*mulata*, almost *morena*'.

However, among the 'pure' whites there is a different feeling about the *caboclo*. White families say that they would feel proud to know that they have 'Indian blood', for it would show the length of time their family had been in Brazil. Frequently a white child is extremely 'Indian looking', that is, a *moreno* with jet-black, straight hair. The nickname of *tapuya* is often given to this type, which is generally admired by the whites. All plantation owners agree that, for work, no one can top the *caboclo*. The north-eastern worker of [157] American Indian physical type will go into the fields at six in the morning and not return until six at night. He takes his lunch with [461] him and eats it there. On the other hand, the *morador* will go to the fields at six and return at noon. However, as permanent resident [464] workers, plantation owners prefer the Negroes of the Recôncavo. Little if any effort is made to 'fix' the *caboclo* on the plantations. When the harvest is finished, he takes his money and departs. Next year he may come again to the same plantation, or he may not. It seems to make little difference to either party.

There have been no serious tensions between the two groups. [466] They work together during part of the year, but spend their free time separately. This does not mean that an occasional *caboclo* will not stay, take a wife from among the *moradores* and start a family.

The following percentages of racial types were taken from a 162 sample of 162 heads of families, using the four major types: *preto*, 50 or 40 per cent; *mulato*, 59 or 49 per cent; *caboclo*, 3 or 2 per cent; *branco*, 11 or 9 per cent.

[1] Little males. Using the diminutive form seems to be a softer and more agreeable way of saying 'mulatto'. [829]

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V. Each physical type in Vila Recôncavo is thought to have a series of personality traits which are correlated with physical appearance. Furthermore, these stereotypes of expected behaviour reflect the attitude of people toward the various racial types present in the population. Two physical types, for example, the *cabra-cabrocha* and the *sarará*, are usually 'more to be pitied than blamed', as they are considered extremely ugly by most people. There is a feeling that they are unfortunate crosses between parents of physical characteristics which do not mix well. They are thought to lack the definite traits which characterize the other physical types and 'even a *preto de qualidade* is better than either of these—at least more handsome'. Furthermore, people of these physical types are thought to be difficult to deal with, irritable and easily angered. They are the physical types which are least preferred in Vila Recôncavo. All other types have some positive qualities. People arrange their preferences in terms of physical type in many ways, according to the qualities they wish to emphasize.

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To the *preto* falls the more humble attributes of being a hard worker, of being humble and capable of loyalty and affection for his employer. He is also called lazy, a contradiction of hard worker. He is considered servile and cheerful. Also it is said that it is the *preto* who knows best how to please *(agradar bem)* the white. With a winning smile, pleasant little sayings and personal attentions, the *preto* knows how to make the *branco* feel important and puts him in the mood to grant favours. In other words, he is a good 'apple polisher', but even this he does with a certain dignity, aware of what he is doing, and aware of the fact that the *branco* also knows. The whites say that a *preto* is usually 'content' to remain *preto*, knowing that while he cannot change his colour, perhaps future generations of his family will have changed theirs. In Vila Recôncavo, people of all racial types, not only the whites, often say that one of the things they like best about the *preto* is that he does not try to be white. No one is more ridiculed than an *homem de côr* who, because of his economic situation and other circumstances, tries to be *gente*, or white.

On the other hand, a *preto* in good economic circumstances, who lives in dignity without pretension, is well thought-of by all. There is one outstanding example of this in Vila Recôncavo. A *preto*, who is the owner of one of the neighbouring sugar plantations and who is quite wealthy, lives quietly and without pretension. His sons go to school in the capital, one to Law School and the other to High School. His relations with the white plantation owners and *usineiros* are cordial and business-like. He would be acceptable at any social gathering he chose to attend, where he would conduct himself like a gentleman, without airs. For this he is admired by all, and pointed to as an example of how the *preto* can conduct himself.

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On the other hand, the *mulato* and the *escuro* have the reputation of being social climbers. This is especially true of the *mulato* or *escuro* who has had education beyond the primary school, and who holds some government post or is a merchant or professional man. In Vila Recôncavo two mulattoes consider themselves as, without exception, the only cultured intellectuals in town. They lament the lack of companions to discuss poetry, literature, art and music. They are the first and loudest to say that the people of Vila Recôncavo are lazy, stupid, ignorant and superstitious. They are inclined to call all others *pretos*, and put as much distance between themselves and the *pretos* as possible. They say that they are much closer, racially speaking, to the white than the Negro.

At social reunions among the upper-class whites, a group of educated mulattoes is often present, and it is on such an occasion that all the pretensions characteristic of the mulatto are believed to appear, and that he shows himself a social climber who makes a fetish of correctness of manners, dress and speech. Pierson, writing about the city of Salvador, sums up the attitude of the Vila Recôncavo white toward the mulatto when he quotes: 'I resent their forwardness, their enviousness, their jealousy, their "lack of respect", their pretentiousness, their inconstancy and unreliability, their arrogance and (upon gaining some measure of improved social position) their overweaning pride, their boastfulness, cocksureness, "cheekiness" and general manner of showing off.'[7] Both the whites and the Negroes of Vila Recôncavo ridicule the mulatto, and when they use the term *mulato* with a certain inflection they convey the picture of a certain kind of personality. The mulatto, traditionally, has had the opportunity to advance socially, until today he is accorded much the same treatment given to the whites. Once on this level there seems to be competition between the two, and the insecurity of the mulatto seems to make for the above characteristics.

The other *mestiços* of the area resent this type of mulatto, whose actions as well as words indicate that he wants to be white as well as to be treated as white. Few servants are willing to work in the household of such a person. Many people who have the physical characteristics of a mulatto, but have not had the opportunity for education and other advancement, do not like to be called *mulato*. Instead they prefer *pardo*, which indicates the physical characteristics of the mulatto without the personality traits.

The stereotypes regarding the *moreno* are happier. A *moreno*, and more particularly *uma morena* (the female) is expected to be liked. The physical attraction towards such people is felt in all classes and colours. The *morena mulata* (mixed-blood *morena*) and the *morena branca* (white brunette) are frequently lumped together in the romantic national idealization of '*morena*'. The *morena* may adopt the ways of whatever group, and she will still be accepted. The *morena*

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829 is the darling of all the racial types, and she can do almost no wrong.

There are also stereotypes regarding the white. He is someone who should not work, who should not get dirty or perspire because of work (in sport it is all right). The white is expected to be well educated, well dressed, wealthy, and to have power—both politically and as a landowner. He should also show a certain sense of responsibility toward those of the lower classes dependent upon him, protecting them against any violation of their rights, watching out for his *afilhados* (godchildren) of lower class, and distributing occa-
563 sional favours. The white is addressed by the formal *o senhor*, while
576 he in return addresses all others by the popular *você*. The white may also receive the very informal and affectionate form of address *yoyô* (for a man) or *yayá* (for a lady), which was traditionally used by slaves for their masters. Interestingly enough, it is usually the darkest of the *pretos* (even the most independent of them) who generally use this form of greeting. *Vossa Excelência* (Your Excellency) is also heard frequently when people of low status of an older generation address an 'aristocratic' white. Sometimes, whites are addressed simply as *meu branco* (my white). When the lower class refer to 'aristocratic white' or when whites talk of themselves, they may simply use the term *gente*, which means more than the simple dictionary definition of 'people': *gente* is synonymous with white, upper class, and wealth. The stereotypes regarding the white and, above all, the very terms by which he is addressed, are in keeping with his landowning aristocratic position.

563 This complicated classification of people by racial type, and these
571 numerous stereotypes of the *homem de côr* by the white and vice-versa, are particularly striking in the Recôncavo. In addition to being simply a way of describing a person, like saying he is short or tall, thin or fat, they also imply what people desire in those of other physical types. The white wants good workers, cheerful people in whom he can have confidence. The *homem de côr* wants and needs a protector, a *patrão*, someone who will help him when he needs help,
563 who will be godfather to his children, etc. But at times people will
578 employ these terms in a derogatory manner. A white, displeased by
571 something a *preto* has done or has not done, will frequently say '*que negro ruim*' (what a bad Negro!). But his *preta* cook may say the same thing of the *mulato claro* water-carrier who spills water on her kitchen floor. In the same way, a *preto* or *mestiço* who has been disappointed by a white may say '*que gente ruim*' (literally: what bad people!). Each of these two expressions has its counterpart of approval. The '*que negro bom*' (what a good Negro) has a wealth of meaning. Applied to whatever *homem de côr*, it expresses all that is warm and good that has developed during four centuries of close relationship between Negro and white. It is at once an apology for oppression and slavery, as well as an immediate thank-you. And for

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the *homem de côr* to say '*Ele É um senhor*' (he IS a real gentleman) or '*um branco bom*' (a good white) is to admit that the white and the Negro can live together in dignity.

There is a series of expressions used by all types to describe the person who is trying to appear white. Whoever tries to be what he is not is considered ridiculous by all. Both whites and Negroes gossip about the social climber and use the terms '*tem pinta*' (has a 'touch of the tarbrush'), '*tem sangue*' (has Negro blood), '*é da raça*' (is of the Negro race), or simply '*besta*' (show-off), '*cheio de arte*' (artful), '*cheio de manha*' (full of little tricks), or '*fala bonito*' (talks pretty).

There are also many phrases used by lower-class people to ridicule Negroes and *mestiços* who are showing off, or 'pushing'. Most of these start off with *Negro*:

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Negro doesn't marry, he gets together.
Negro doesn't accompany a procession, he runs after it.
Negro doesn't sit down, he squats.
Negro in white clothes is a sign of rain.
Negro doesn't hear Mass, he spies on it.
Negro at a white man's party is the first to grab and the last to eat.
Negro's intelligence is the same size as his hair.

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The concepts and fixed ideas which the people of Vila Recôncavo have of these racial types were also revealed in their responses to a pictorial questionnaire devised in the field.[1] A series of eight photographs of people unknown to those answering the questionnaire was shown, consisting of a male and a female of each of the four major racial types, the *caboclo*, the *preto*, the *mulato* and the *branco*. An attempt was made to use photographs giving no clue to the possible class position of the eight persons. However, the photographs which we were able to secure were not entirely satisfactory for our purposes in Vila Recôncavo. The picture of the caboclo male was of a man of middle age, but a type considered in the local conception as having a strong personality, while the *caboclo* woman was older and certainly not *simpática* (pleasant) in the local view. The two *pretos* were both unmistakably *pretos*, and both young. The *mulato* male and female differed one from the other, as the man was definitely a common *mulato* type, while the woman was almost a *morena mulata* rather than 'pure' *mulata*. She was young and considered much more *simpática* than any of the four women presented. The two whites were not distinguished in any way; and there was doubt in the minds of the people answering the questionnaire as to whether these two were 'pure' white or not.

The questionnaire was given to 85 people: 18 *brancos*—11 males,

[1] These questionnaires were given by a local assistant after the author's stay in Vila Recôncavo, but the results agree in general with the observations made during research in the community.

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7 females; 41 *mulatos*—21 males, 20 females; 18 *pretos*—7 males, 11 females; 8 *caboclos*—6 males, 2 females.

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Table I gives the racial types which were found respectively most physically attractive, most wealthy, best worker, most honest and most religious.

TABLE I.

Question	No. of people who selected in first place			
	Brown	Preto	Mulato	Caboclo
Most attractive man	39	17	14	15
Most attractive woman	26	3	30	26
Most wealthy man	27	11	9	38
Most wealthy woman	37	8	17	23
Best worker, man	4	38	13	30
Best worker, woman	7	22	25	33
Most honest man	11	22	8	44
Most honest woman	15	13	22	36
Most religious man	21	15	13	36
Most religious woman	17	11	17	40

(Bold type indicates the group most frequently selected in first place.)

From Table I, it results that: (a) the ideal of the most attractive male is the white; (b) the preferred female type is the *mulata*, but the *cabocla*, it must be noted, is almost equally selected with the white; both the *mulata* and the *cabocla* (despite her apparent age) of the photos are of types which have the physical characteristics of the *morena* so preferred in Vila Recôncavo; (c) surprisingly, the *caboclo* male was selected as the wealthiest, in view of the stereotype that it is the white who is generally wealthiest, but I believe that this is due to the fact that people found the photo of the *caboclo* to have a rather 'distinguished' face, while the photo of the white was considered to be a young man with what might be considered a 'characterless' face; (d) the *preto* man was chosen as the best worker, which supports the stereotype discussed earlier, but the *cabocla* was chosen as the best woman worker (this may be explained by the local phrase used to describe her: 'Good for nothing else'); (e) the *caboclos*, both male and female, were chosen as most honest and most religious, which is in keeping with the stereotype of the *caboclo*, who is considered more serious and solemn than the native of the Recôncavo.

Table II, a breakdown of Table I by racial types, shows clearly the type selected in first place by the Negroes, the mulattoes, the whites and the *caboclos*, in answer to the same questionnaire. The most obvious inference derived from Table II is the extremely low posi-

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tion of the Negro woman in relation to the other women. She was chosen in first place in only one instance, namely as best worker, and only by the Negroes. In spite of the fact that in Table I the mulatto woman was considered the most attractive, she was chosen so only by the mulattoes. The other three racial types selected the *caboclo*

TABLE II.

Question	Chosen in first place by			
	Negroes	*Mulattoes*	*Whites*	*Caboclos*
Most attractive man	P	B	B	B
Most attractive woman	C & B	M	B	B
Most wealthy man	P	C	C	C
Most wealthy woman	B	B	B	B
Best worker, man	P	C	P	P
Best worker, woman	P	C	M	C
Most honest man	C	C	C	C
Most honest woman	C	C	C	C
Most religious man	C & M	C	C	C & B
Most religious woman	C	C	B	C

(P—*preto*; B—*branco*; C—*caboclo*; M—*mulato*. Where two racial types are in first place, they received an equal number of 'votes'.)

and the white woman. In summing up the total number of 'votes', the mulatto woman won by a narrow margin (four votes). It is interesting to note that the Negroes chose the *preto* man as the most wealthy, putting the caboclo in second place, while the other three racial types put the *caboclo* first.

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VI. There is a saying in the Recôncavo that where there was sugar, there were Negroes. This rule of thumb seems to hold remarkably well even today. On the islands in the bay where there never were *engenhos*, there are few *pretos*. In the town of Vila Recôncavo, and in a small settlement to the west of Vila Recôncavo where there never was an *engenho*, there are relatively few *pretos*, in comparison with the area of *engenhos* and plantations. The region as a whole can be shaded off in dark and light, to distinguish roughly the spatial arrangement according to colour. In the areas where there was and is sugar, there are many more *gente branqueada* (whitened people) than in the non-plantation areas.

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These lightened areas seem to continue to lighten, while the darker areas retain their dark characteristics. In Vila Recôncavo, which is a *mestiço* community, there is much more opportunity for

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the lighter-skinned people for intermarriage with the mass of light-skinned people of the capital. Most of the townspeople have connexions of some sort in Salvador and travel back and forth a great deal. Some, mostly girls, take employment in the city as maids, and there either get married, or '*aparecem grávidas*' (show up pregnant), afterwards returning home to stay or for visits.

On the plantations the people have little opportunity for such mixing, owing to their isolation. Mixing occurs either on the same plantation or between neighbouring plantations, and since most of the plantation workers are dark, the offspring tends to remain dark. There is comparatively little marriage between people of the urban and rural zones.

The people of the town consider themselves far superior culturally to the *taberéu* or 'hick'[1] of the rural zone. Not only are they lighter in colour, but they are more 'citified', having more contact with the outside world, and this contact increases daily. Only in the town did the lower-class people express interest in the racial situation in the United States and particularly question segregation, a practice they could not understand. In the rural zone, the United States meant only some place other than Bahia. This is given as an example of the difference in degree of sophistication between the two parts of a comparatively small area. The sophistication of the townspeople tends to increase, as does their lightness of colour, while on the *fazendas* the colour has remained almost static, as has the degree of instruction.

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Class is one of the most important factors in the everyday lives of the people of Vila Recôncavo. *Who's Who* is well known to all the residents of the community. Almost any resident will say that there are two classes, the rich and the poor. But definitions vary greatly as to what is rich, while practically all agree as to what is poor. Rich means, primarily, having money, a good house, more than one suit of clothing, a horse or mule, a servant to do the housework, and not having to do manual work. It also includes power of some description over other people. Poor is the reverse of all these things: working hard for someone else, a mud house with a dirt floor, one suit of clothes and one pair of shoes. For everyday ranking, this division into only two classes may serve.

A closer analysis shows that four distinct classes can be recognized, as stated earlier. There are many elements which go toward defining the classes—wealth, education and family. Race is also important. People say that wealth is the most important, education the second, and race the third in importance. Thus race is but one of a number of elements ranking people in a social scale, rather than a separating factor which divides them into distinct groups.

[1] Other terms used to convey the same meaning are *gente do mato* (people of the forest) and *gente do roça* (backwoodsmen).

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In only one case can we absolutely equate a racial type with a class—the 'aristocratic white' of the rural area with upper class. The upper class of Vila Recôncavo is composed of a few families, descendants of the *senhores de engenho* (landowners), who have kept control of their lands, as well as having made a professional life in the capital as a lawyer, engineer or politician. They are upper-class not only in Vila Recôncavo, but also in the capital, Salvador, and their families are known in other great cities of Brazil. The horizon of these people is far wider than that of anyone else in Vila Recôncavo, and the scope of their activities is wider. Thus the gap between this upper class and any of the other classes is enormous. Nevertheless, the relations between it and the others are close, as this small class spends a large part of the year in the area and travels to it frequently during its stay in Salvador. There is little or no competition between this class and those under it, at least in the rural situation. In the city they are subject to all the stress and strain common to any 'high society' group.

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In the rural situation this class remains, to a great extent socially apart from the other strata, but frequently a plantation owner gives a party for the *redondeza* (for the personnel of the nearby plantations). To such a gathering 200 or 300 people may come. The whites remain more as spectators than participants, but rules of courtesy and hospitality are rigorously observed, and guests are made to feel at home, without class differences. It is at such a gathering that the local *mulato* intellectuals and leaders will often attempt to show that they are closer to the whites than the other *mestiços*.

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The chief class competition in Vila Recôncavo is between the second highest class and those below it. This second class, the local upper class, includes all the whites of the town, plus a large number of mulattoes and Negroes. As a rule it is this class which is the most conservative, the most anxious to retain its 'superiority', and which bears the brunt of pressures from below. This class will seize upon and magnify any element possible to belittle those who are, in any way, possible competition. It is in this group that the daughters are 'guarded', and have neither the freedom of the daughters of the plantation owners nor of the daughters of the fishermen. Ostentation plays a large part in their lives, and the men of this group rarely appear in the street without collar, tie and suit coat.

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This group is also widely split by politics. Politics are one of its main methods for holding or advancing its social position, and they are taken seriously. Political scrapping has broken up the social activities of this group to a large extent, and there is more than one case of a family not speaking to another because of political differences. As a result their social activities are almost nil. They lead an unquestionably dull life, attempting to preserve a way of life belong-

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ing to the past, hard-put to maintain their economic status and remain gentlemen, with the result that they retreat more and more into a narrower scope of activity. This class is comparatively small, and while there is no upward movement to the class above it, there are many people hanging on its lower rung, coming up from below. Money will carry a person, whatever his racial type, into this group, although in the rural zone it is occupation and increase in money and authority which will elevate an individual, as in the case of the plantation administrator.

It is in the great body of the third class, the local middle class, that we find the most social ascension, or at least the most opportunity for ascension. Anyone in this class can better himself if he so desires, and once again it is wealth which is most important. Racial type enters here perhaps more strongly than in the second stratum; also the measure of desire to climb which the individual possesses. For among the majority of this class, there is what appears to be a lack of desire to climb. Perhaps this is allied with the past, with a strong heritage of slavery. At any rate, it is here that class and race are most generally confused.

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563 Most people in this stratum who desire to ascend socially will say that it is better to be white, or at least light, than dark because it is the white who has the most money, the most education, and consequently most opportunities. Traditionally the light-skinned mulatto has been able to share to some extent in these things. Therefore, today, if an individual is lighter it will be easier for him to climb, simply because of his lightness. Upper-class people accept light-skinned people more readily—nevertheless, it is considered better to be a wealthy *preto* than a poor white.

For this class, after money, marriage is one of the surest methods to climb, and it is a fact that the light-skinned person marries *upward* more easily than the dark-skinned person. No one in any class likes a marriage in which the skin colours are too far apart. Any marriage of dark with light or white will be referred to as *mosca no leite*, or fly in the milk, and a certain repugnance is felt by all. One man, formerly a fisherman, but now a merchant of some means, is a *preto* married to a *branca da terra* who was poor but almost white. This marriage has not helped him much, as his wife did not bring him social position, but it has 'lightened' his children. His own status is increased through his financial transactions. But his children, who are lighter, are being educated in the city, and more readily acceptable because of their colour and their economic background. Their chances for a better marriage are greater than if they had the same background but were dark.

In another case, a white girl of the local upper class of the town is engaged to a *preto*, who is an engineer in Salvador, but whose family has roots in Vila Recôncavo. There was great resistance to

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the engagement on the part of the girl's family, and all her friends felt that, although she had a good 'catch', that is, a successful man, he was too dark for her. This in spite of the fact that the girl's father is a *branco da terra*, and that her grandmother was dark-skinned.

One great bar between the upper class of 'aristocratic whites' and those below them is that of marriage. The white of the second class may sometimes be acceptable to the upper class, because he is white; but the chances are heavy against the marriage of an 'aristocratic white' with an *homem de côr*. Perhaps in the city situation a marriage between a white of this upper class and a *mestiço* of the same class would take place, but certainly not in a rural area.

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Until the end of the last century many bastards were produced by the white plantation owners and their sons, with the slaves and ex-slaves. The Vila Recôncavo population is made up of a large segment of these individuals and their offspring, and in many cases they bear the name of the family of the white. So that today there exist in Vila Recôncavo people who are relatives to various degrees of the white upper class, and in some cases have the same family name. These people are not recognized socially by the whites. In many instances the mixed-blood has the family name, not because he was given it, but because he took it. Frequently a white family will keep track of the descendants on the illegitimate side of the family, and help them if necessary, but they would never introduce one of these individuals as a member of the family, even when that person has all the family physical characteristics.

In one case, the illegitimate daughter of a union between a slave and a white man recently found herself in a position to help the legitimate daughter of her father's cousin. This girl was born free to a slave, before abolition. The slave mother managed to educate the girl, who became a successful schoolteacher. Later on, when her father's cousin's legitimate daughter, widowed with three children, needed help to educate one of her own daughters, she found that aid from her *mestiço* cousin.

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This type of race mixture is far less common today than it was some 70 years ago. However, young white men still frequently have their early sex experiences with *mestiço* and *preto* girls.

The fourth class, the lowest, is confined to the town and consists of people who have no steady employment and who have no *patrão*. They are people caught in the changing economic pattern of the area, from a highly personalized *patrão* economy to a more modern money economy. As yet there is no room for this group in the rural area. There are no 'pure' whites here—a few *brancos da terra*, and *mulatos* and *pretos*. Ascension from this class, which is very small, is easier for a woman, especially if she is light-skinned. For a man, only money will take him upward.

Traditionally the *preto* is linked with ignorance and superstition,

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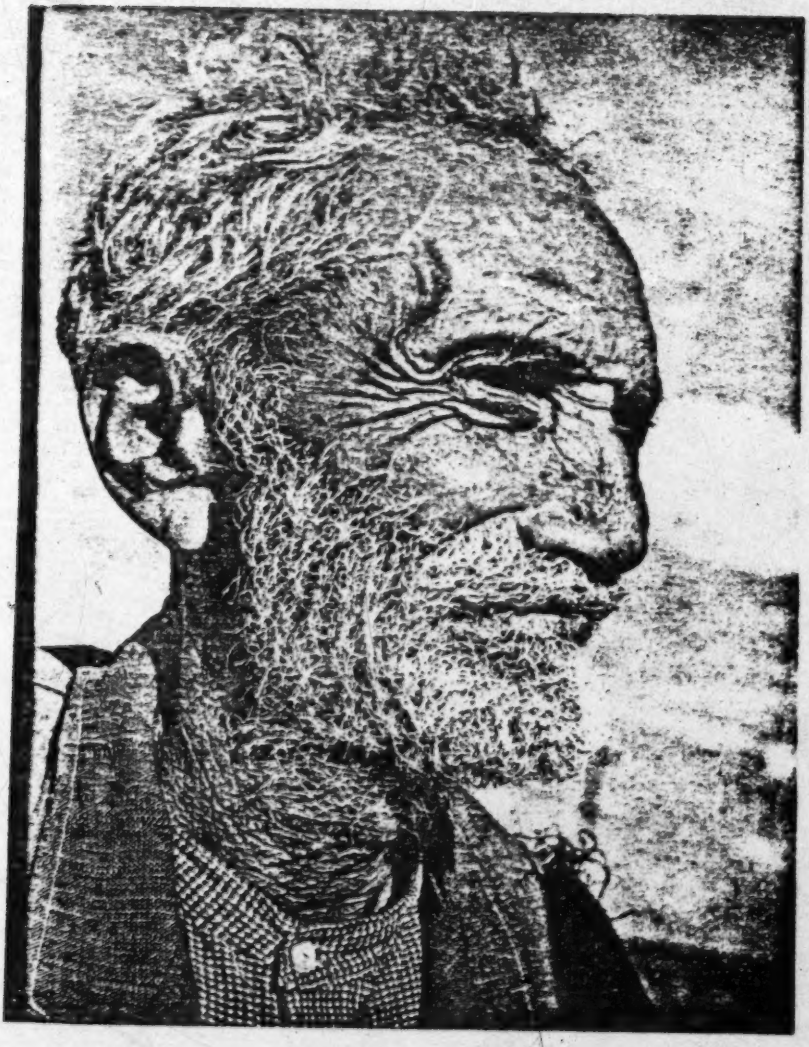

3. Caboclo of the interior of Bahia

[facing P. 42]

Traditionally the preto is linked with ignorance and superstition, and a most common example of his 'ignorance', cited by the upper strata of Vila Recôncavo society, is his belief in *candomblé*, the fetish cults of African origin so numerous in Salvador which have been described by various authors.[8] In the Caribbean, *candomblé* is known as voodoo and, as in Brazil, there is a mixture of Roman Catholic with African religious elements. In Vila Recôncavo there are highly complicated rituals of ceremony and healing, but owing to the pressures of modern life almost no one has the time necessary to spend in the full preparation for a *filha de santo* (servant of the god) or a *mãe de santo* (caretaker of the gods) and much of the old ritual is being forgotten and discarded, and newer and simpler innovations are in evidence. Another example given of the *preto's* 'superstition' in Vila Recôncavo is his participation in the cult of Janaina, the goddess of the water. This cult is really an offshoot of *candomblé*, Yemanja being the name of the African *orixa* or divinity, while Janaina is the name given to her by many of the cults in Brazil. It is Janaina 'who sends the fish to the fishermen', and they must thank her and give her gifts occasionally. Generally it is the *mãe de santo* who knows all the calls and prayers for Janaina and who presents the fishermen's gifts. Anyone who intends to climb the social ladder first disassociates himself from these rites, and then publicly condemns those who participate in them—although, in many cases, such an individual will continue secretly to give financial support to a local *mãe de santo* and to send gifts to Janaina. Often it is heard of a person: 'Oh yes, he is *gente* now, but last night he secretly sent his usual present to Janaina.' Individuals of all racial classifications belong to *candomblé*, although popular opinion has it that only the *pretos* engage in these activities. One can observe all racial types at a *candomblé festa* (ceremony), either as participants or as spectators. In one case in another area of the Recôncavo there is even a white *pae de santo* (male caretaker of the gods), a former lawyer!

Nevertheless, in Vila Recôncavo, there are examples of *pretos* and *mestiços* who have shown themselves capable of progress, with and without education. Two examples are the plantation administrators, cited earlier, who have risen to that honoured and relatively well-paid occupation in spite of the fact that they cannot read or write. On another plantation, the *feitor* has taught himself to read and write and is known as an excellent story-teller. Primary schools were recently opened in the rural zone of Vila Recôncavo, and night schools for the adults. The response has been great, people often walking long distances at night to attend class, in spite of the fact that one of the most disliked and feared things is going out at night.

In Vila Recôncavo, there has been a central primary school for many years, with an attendance of 354 of all racial types, children of the whites as well as those of the others, although no children of the

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4. A black cowboy of the Sertão

[facing P. 43]

planters. People in the upper class of the town, when they can, send their children to the capital to continue their education, and there are several *mestiço* students from Vila Recôncavo studying law, medicine and engineering in Salvador. The intelligence of the mulatto is traditional, and it has been equally traditional that the darker-skinned person is unintelligent. Today these traditions are not as strong as before, but still it is felt that the mulatto has somewhat more aptitude than the Negro. The old idea of the Negro, meant for work and to be servile, still exists, now tempered with the knowledge that education can change the situation. There is only one club in Vila Recôncavo—a football club—and the players are all shades, from white to black, and so are the spectators. They all sit or stand together under the shade of the one big tree which gives shade to the playing field. The field is on the property of a white man who, while he has nothing to do with the team, allows them to play there, put up goal posts and markers. The bar and recreation centre are open to all so long as they wear shoes—a ruling made to keep out the muddy feet of children who came straight from the beach to have a 'coke'. All the racial types and classes get together here to play pool and gossip, this being the one and only point of public social activity in the town. At the movies, the admission price is extremely low, the same for everyone, and all four classes attend. Negroes and whites of all classes sit next to each other. At church there are no special pews, the faithful usually gathering in the front and the less faithful hanging about near the back. The choir and the acolytes are from all classes and colours. At parties, which are few, colour lines are disregarded, *brancos* and *morenos* dance with *mulatos* and *pretos* just as long as both partners can *pular* (jump).

The social situation is gradually changing, and the extremely personal element is being lost. It is strongest on the private plantation, where the owner spends the greater part of the year, but at the *usina* much of the personal element is weakened because of the numbers of workers. Even at the *usina*, there is visiting and gossiping between the owners' families and the workers. But at the *usina* not all the workers accept their subservient position as do those of the plantations. This is specially true of the higher echelon of specialists and technicians of the mill, who will frequently not go to a party given by the owner, even though invited. It seems to be a way of saying that the company of the white owners is neither needed nor wanted. They prefer to keep their relations on a strictly business basis. At the *usina*, when a worker is sick, he goes to the medical post where he is treated by a paid nurse, rather than to the owner's house. On pay day, the *usina* worker is paid at the mill by a paymaster, not in the living room of the owner's house. Nevertheless, in spite of the industrialized aspect of the mill, the number of workers is not too large to exclude all personal contact with the owners, who adminis-

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trate and oversee most of the operations. This type of relationship has proved so satisfactory that up to date there have been no strikes, and no labour movements, or unions formed among the workmen of São Pedro. The length of time the technicians and other workmen of the *usina* have remained in their employ, refusing employment in other *usinas* and other occupations, has been a matter of pride to the owners of São Pedro.

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It is on the plantations belonging to the *usina* that the white owner-*mestiço* worker personal relations are least close. The *usina* owners are able to make only occasional tours of inspection of the plantations, and therefore have little personal contact with the workers. However, the administrator has in many respects taken the place of the owner. He is the only man on the plantation with authority, and all complaints and requests for favours or help must be presented to him. In one case, an administrator has been on the same plantation for 26 years, and is well-known for the 'court' he holds. Once a year he gives an immense party for the entire community, and people from all four classes attend. He is wanted as godfather for the children of the workmen, and as *compadre* in their marriages. Nevertheless, the administrator is as much an employee of the *usina* as is the worker, and while the administrator can and does assume some of the attitudes and responsibilities of the owner, he cannot assume them all. However, it is a frequent saying among the white-owner class that the real owners are the administrators, for they are the group closest to the workers and to the land. A plantation with a poor administrator is not only a poor producer, but also means hardship for the *moradores*; a poor administrator will take no interest in them, and take little care of them.

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In other areas of the Recôncavo, where the *usinas* are larger and more industrialized and where no owner resides either at the *usina* or on one of the plantations, but lives always in Salvador, there is only a paid representative of the corporation at the *usina*. In such large industrial units the personal element is almost entirely lacking both at the *usina* and on the company-owned plantations. There have been cases of labour difficulties, strikes, violence and the intrusion of political groups. In several instances, there are efforts today, on the owner's part to re-establish personal contact with mill and field workers, even on the largest of the corporation *usinas* and plantations.

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VII. The relations between people of different physical types in Vila Recôncavo and on the surrounding sugar plantations have grown out of the plantation-slave system which flourished in the region about a century ago. Many patterns and attitudes formed in that epoch persist even today in the town and on the privately-owned plantations in the vicinity.

plantations in the vicinity. There is the aristocratic group of whites descendants of the *senhores de engenho*—who form almost a caste, marrying among themselves and living out their own social life apart from the Negro and racially mixed population of the community. Just as the slave owners in the past, however, they depend upon the Negro and *mestiço* for labour; the Negro is pictured as the faithful servant and attendant of the white aristocrat. Again, as in the past, the mulatto who was the offspring of the European master and a slave mother is pictured as a social upstart and an intelligent trouble-maker. Yet it is the man of mixed ancestry who holds the intermediate economic and social positions; he is the minor bureaucrat, the technician in the *usina*, and the administrator and *feitor* on the plantations. The essential hierarchy has changed little since colonial times; and the relationship between these aristocratic whites and their Negro and mixed workmen is still a highly personal one lacking in social tensions, since each knows his proper position and each knows his rights, duties and obligations toward the other.

There is no race problem in Vila Recôncavo, nor does prejudice or discrimination work out as it does in other parts of the Western world. A Negro cannot become a member of the aristocracy, but a well-educated and economically successful Negro can have easy social relations with this stratum. Negro ancestry is without doubt a grave disadvantage in economic and social mobility, but there are no political and economic positions closed to a man of Negro or mixed descent. As yet, however, only a few Negroes have moved into high political or economic positions. There is only one plantation owner who is a Negro, and Negroes and *mestiços* hold only minor bureaucratic and political positions in the community. The *prefeito* or mayor has nearly always been drawn from the aristocratic white group, and has never been challenged from the Negro and mixed population. Yet in the town and among the mill workers, 'people of colour' are beginning to show independence, and unwillingness always to occupy a subservient and lowly position. The administrators like to ride better horses than the aristocrats, to have fancier saddles, to dress better, and to be more ostentatious than their employers. Many townspeople know the big city, and the essential class and racial democracy which exists there. There is competition to join the local upper class, and derogatory racial criteria are used to deride competitors who would like to rise out of the lower class groups into this growing upper class. African culture traits such as *candomblé* and the cult of Janaina are associated with low status, and people who would rise in the local social hierarchy are anxious to disassociate themselves from these groups.

As modern attitudes and ideology penetrate Vila Recôncavo, there are more and more problems of class relationships; the population is becoming extremely class-conscious, and there is an in-

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creasing desire to rise in the social hierarchy. In the rural districts physical type is less important than in the town, since there is less chance for one to rise socially, the positions of prestige being highly limited. But in the town and at the *usina*, the opportunities are greater, and therefore more emphasis is put upon racial type; although, even in the town, racial type is not the most important criterion for ascending the social scale, the most important being the possession of wealth and education. However, in the town, people who have wealth and education also show a tendency to 'lighten', generation after generation, as well as to ascend socially. There is no such thing as 'passing' in Vila Recôncavo, and there is no need for it, for many individuals who clearly show traces of Negro ancestry are called white and treated as white, with no constraint or embarrassment. Also there are no social activities closed to the *homem de côr*, provided he has the money and the education to take advantage of them. Physical attraction is also extremely important in the social acceptance of rejection of people, as is shown in the complicated fashion of classifying and stereotyping individuals, and the idealization of the *morena*.

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In other areas of the Recôncavo, the personal element has been lost to a great extent, and has been replaced with a rigid class system, based upon wealth, personal initiative, education, racial type and 'luck'. For the most part, the tradition of the *patrão* is disappearing and people are more dependent upon their own resources in a more strictly monetary economy. Vila Recôncavo still however remains sufficiently isolated to preserve much of the tradition of the past, of easy-going personal relations between people of all classes and racial types.

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